employees in the post office located in Parliament House, Members of Parliament are facing inconvenience in getting their work done by Standing in the queue;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a number of employees are being reduced in this office and they are being transferred elsewhere; and

(c) if so, the reasons for reducing the staff and ignoring inconvenience being faced by Members of Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) No, Sir. The workload of the office was earlier reviewed. On the basis of review one post of Postal Assistant was found surplus which was redeployed in another needy Post Office. On receipt of subsequent complaint alleging shortage of staff, one additional Postal Assistant has since been provided subject to further review of establishment.

(b) and (c) As indicated in para (a) above one post of Postal Assistant was earlier redeployed. In the meantime, an additional Postal Assistant has been provided in the post office and there is no inconvenience to Member of Parliament.

Cheaper rates for calls abroad

1956. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that calling abroad from cell phone has become cheaper as compared to MTNL and BSNL landline;

(b) if so, what are the comparative rates of State Trunk Dialing/ International Long Distance Tariff as on the 1st July, 2003;

(c) whether it is also a fact that various cell phone/WLL/MTNL/BSNL companies are revising their tariff arbitrarily without consulting TRAI; and

(d) if so, what are the rates applicable as on the 1st July, 2003 of various companies as per the approval of the TRAI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Most of the cellular operators have recently

revised tariff for International calls. The current rates as reported by Telecome Regulatory Authority of India are cheaper as compared to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited/Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited landline International call rates.

(b) Details of STD/International long distance tariff applicable for cellular service, as reported by TRAI, are given in Statement-I (*See* below). The STD/ILD rates applicable for MTNL and BSNL landline subscribers are given in Statement-II (*See* below).

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Statement-I

STD/ISD rates applicable for cellular subscribers

(Rs. per minute)

1. Calls from Cellular to Cellular	—	Rs. 1.99 to Rs. 2.99
2. Calls from Cellular to WLL	—	Rs. 1.99 to Rs. 3.99
3. Calls from Cellular to PSTN	—	Rs. 1.99 to Rs. 3.99
4. ISD calls rate	—	Rs. 15.99 to Rs. 17.99

Notes:

(i) The STD rates varies within the range given above according to distance slabs and also for different operators/tariff plans.

(ii) The rates shown are offered by most cellular operators. However, long distance tariff of few cellular operators inclusive of airtime charge is higher than the corresponding BSNL/MTNL landline rates.

(iii) In some cases where the monthly fixed charges of particular tariff plan is substantially higher, the STD rates are below the range indicated above.

(iv) Few cellular operators charge ISD rates equipment to the corresponding rates for BSNL landline subscribers.

Statement-II

STD/ISD RATES APPLICABLE FOR BSNL/MTNL SUBSCRIBERS

(i) NATIONAL LONG DISTANCE CHARGES:

INTER CIRCLE:

Charges (Rs. Per minute)

Distance (Kms.)	Fixed to Fixed	Fixed to Cell	Fixed to WLL(M)
0-50	1.20	2.40	1.20
50-100	2.40	2.40	2.40
100-200	2.40	2.40	2.40
200-500	4.80	3.60	4.80
>500	4.80	3.60	4.80

INTRA CIRCLE:

Charges (Rs. Per minute)

Distance (Kms.)	Fixed to Fixed	Fixed to Cell	Fixed to WLL(M)
0-50	1.20	2.40	1.20
50-100	1.20	2.40	1.20
100-200	2.40	2.40	2.40
200-500	2.40	2.40	2.40
>500	2.40	2.40	2.40

(iii) INTERNATIONAL LONG DISTANCE TARIFF:

Slab	Country	Peak Rate	Off-Peak Rate
Slab-I	SAARC and other neighbouring countries	21.18	18.00
Slab-II	Africa, Europe, Gulf etc.	24.00	21.18
Slab-III	America and other places in Western Hemisphere	24.00	21.18